

RICHARD WILSON

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## Remember John Paton Davies?

An older generation will remember John Paton Davies, Jr., now 56, as an intense young State Department career officer whose views embarrassed his superiors during the McCarthy era. He was cleared for loyalty in an interdepartmental trial but was sacked for "lack of judgment" because he expressed doubts of Chiang Kai-Shek's potential for victory over the Communists on the Chinese mainland.

This view was heresy in those days because it might carry a contamination of sympathy with the Communist cause, which was then even more intolerable in the State Department than today.

Mr. Davies went to Lima, Peru, where he supports a wife and seven children by manufacturing and designing furniture. He has written a book entitled "Foreign and Other Affairs" (W. W. Norton & Co., New York) which reveals his contempt for the Communist ideology as the instrument of world domination.

Mr. Davies, in government, was a tough man, accustomed to sleeping on the board floors of military transport planes. He had served in a dozen or more important posts, jumped by parachute into the Burmese jungle, and was a chief political adviser in Moscow and Berlin.

He has written a tough book which gets at some of the absurdities on which we operate our foreign policy, particularly that part of it called "the battle for men's minds." This part will be hard to swallow by those who rationalize our policies as based on morals and idealism, by those who preferred a Castro to a Batista, who hated Chiang and revered Mao, who chose Patrice

Lumumba rather than Moise Tshombe; by those who rallied at the military dictatorships of Latin-America, and by all those who would spread world-wide the American type of Democracy, however little it was understood or applied.

The Peace Corps and Voice of America mentality evidently made little impression on Mr. Davies in his long service with the State Department, and the Kennedy "grand design" left him cold as he worked on his own designs for furniture at the foot of the Andes.

For the test of a new government, Mr. Davies thinks, is not some Washington concept of its moral or democratic tone, nor how it came into power, but whether it can maintain order, promote economic growth and stability and thus become in due course a reliably representative government in which constitutionalism can flourish.

Mr. Davies would not go into much of a flap over a Betancourt in Venezuela or a Juan Bosch in the Dominican Republic. The American people will not approve, but will have to learn, he says, that the trend in the underdeveloped part of the world is not toward democracy but toward authoritarianism, usually military regimes, but with advanced and popular ideas.

Mr. Davies has another idea which will damage the sensibilities of the Georgetown and Foggy Bottom set with its candles-at-dinner, hi-fi music and abstract painting concepts of American culture. The world doesn't want much of this, nor even preachments from our founding fathers, Mr. Davies finds. What the world likes is straight-forward

American vulgarism. This has caused the Russians, with their cumbersome Marxian ideology, more trouble than anything else in the contested places of the world.

"In contrast," says Mr. Davies, "The combination of American materialism and American pop culture is one of the most potent influences ever loosed in the world. The appeal is nearly universal because merchandising creativity, research, and development meant it to be so. The infinite permutations of plastic, luminescence . . . extrusions . . . sonic effects . . . outdo the total philosophical and moral output of our Founding Fathers. 'This,' simple people everywhere sigh and say, 'Ah, this is America.'"

It may be vapid and vulgar, says Mr. Davies, but the message is comprehensible to all and appallingly popular with most. The West has flourished, communism has languished and the world knows it, and this is our heaviest weapon in the battle for men's minds.

The range of Mr. Davies' book is broad and some of it shows his lingering resentment over a ruined career. But he has a lot to say that, if listened to, would make American foreign policy more practical and effective.

"We are preoccupied with ideology," he says. "We are insufficiently aware that civilization is moving out of the epoch of political philosophies and entering the era of know-how, with us in the vanguard. Should the lagging countries move forward and not sink into a bog of squalor and chaos, it will be mainly because administrative and technical know-how is applied. It will not be because of ideology . . ."